



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Mennonite  
**new life**  
centre

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## The Comfort of Home

Dear MNLCT Community,

2020 was an unprecedented year, unlike anything we have all experienced in modern times. The COVID-19 global pandemic washed over our lives, our plans, and our dreams as it painted the world with a broad brush and forced us to isolate in place, physically distance ourselves, and maybe most importantly, to rethink how we connect with each other.

Governments and social services organizations across the nation responded to the crisis in ways that were meant to keep our Canadian homeland and homes intact. Our federal government sourced vaccines and provided financial benefits to those who lost jobs; our public health agencies provided us with concrete guidelines on how to protect ourselves and our loved ones from infection; our cities redeployed staff to support vital new services; and community organizations helped people connect with the services they needed.

With COVID-19 threatening our way of life and our sense of security, we held close the ideas of home and hearth, safety and security, family and friends, and community. Home, however, is a fluid term, evoking different thoughts depending on our lived experiences. While some of us could retreat to a comfortable home, for many COVID-19 only exacerbated their challenges: income insecurity, lack of affordable housing, systemic discrimination, and food and health inequity.

Despite the devastation of a global pandemic and the sadness and worry we faced over the last year, it was paramount that we all had a place to call home – a place of welcome, hope, and healing. The Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto (MNLCT) has spent decades walking together with immigrants and refugees as they have made Canada home, and we hoped that we could be a safe harbour during COVID-19 for anyone who needed support, be it assistance navigating services or someone to talk to and to hear a friendly, reassuring voice.

As I reflect on a year that was coloured by a pandemic, I keep coming back to the commitment that all at MNLCT made to our communities to keep as many people safe as possible. I think about the decision we made to pivot to full virtual services, and I reflect on all the resulting shifts and changes we enacted to be able to provide accessible, online services across all of our programs. I revisited the decisions we made to support staff as they cared for not only our clients but themselves



Shelly D'Mello  
Executive Director  
of MNLCT



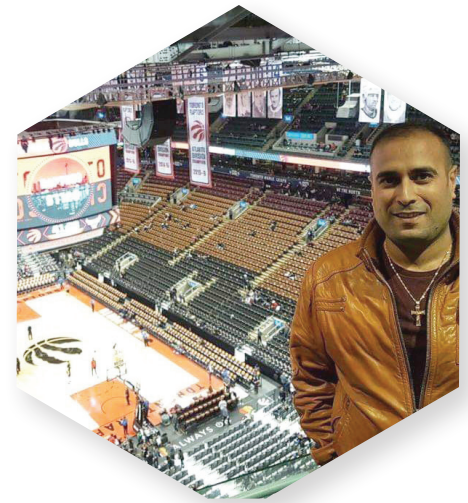
and their loved ones too. But most importantly, I think about how our communities rose to the challenges and exhibited resilience, compassion, and kindness beyond what we thought was physically possible.

I am honoured to take this opportunity to share some of the many steps we took together in 2020 to meet needs and address gaps in our communities. For instance, in the face of rapidly changing information – when we needed to get credible programming and health information out to clients and the community at large – we launched a weekly webinar series entitled #AskMNLCT. Participants who joined the sessions could ask their most pressing questions about how to prevent COVID-19 infection, or how to remain mentally healthy in the face of social isolation, or how to help their children with their online classes. Another example was the launch of our MNLCT iCent Newcomer Support Mobile Application, easily accessible through a mobile phone, which allowed us to push important health and safety notifications to our subscribers on a timely basis.

But the full story of how we all responded to COVID-19 lies in the one-on-one conversations we had with our community members. It's in the stories of the mom and dad who gave their kids the family computer for online school during the day while they got caught up on their online English classes at night. It exists in the hopes and dreams of the essential services person who kept our economy and communities going by working in health care, grocery stores and warehouse. Or with the person who lost their job due to the lockdown but who was able to access government benefits so that their basic needs were covered. It lives with those who, prior to this pandemic, could not use digital technology, but who can now join a Zoom call and send emails because they acquired digital literacy skills. There have been so, so many little moments of accomplishments, joy, and resilience and it is the sum of all of these that tips the balance and that allows us to triumphantly say that we will overcome this pandemic.

This report is a celebration of the small steps we have all taken as a community towards a healthy and prosperous future. It is our narrative for how we envision a Canada that values diversity and growth for all who make it home, and how we continue to live the mission, vision, and values of the Centre through every aspect of our work. It is with hope, compassion, and kindness that our human spirits can see a future with the pandemic behind us, where we can once again gather together in each other's company.

A journey of this magnitude happens because of a shared vision of home and holistic well-being. I am grateful for our staff, volunteers, funders, and partners – for giving of themselves to help others during a time that they themselves may have needed help, and for walking together with newcomers who are building their new homes in Canada. May you prosper in health, happiness, and home.



***“I am determined to do whatever it takes to secure a good future for my kids. What Canada has done for us is beyond belief. My family and I owe our lives to this country. This is our home now.”***

**– Shahoud, refugee from Syria, Settlement Client (and Toronto Raptors fan!)**

# MNLCT AT A GLANCE

The Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto has been providing newcomers and immigrants of all ages, genders, and cultural identities with the tools and resources needed for social and economic integration into Canadian life since 1983.

As a community-based charity, the Centre is committed to creating meaningful pathways for newcomers and immigrants to contribute their skills, talents and voices to their communities wherever they live, work, play and learn.

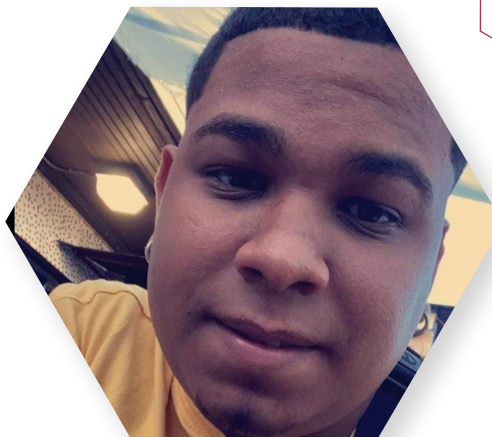
Through our deep expertise and connection to the community, we provide caring and professional support that addresses short- and long-term needs and aspirations of clients.

Services include settlement information and referrals for immigration support and community connections; language training; community mental health counselling; employment, entrepreneurship, and career bridging supports; and counter-human trafficking counselling and case management, with programs evolving to meet the needs of an ever-changing immigrant population.



***“We immigrated almost seven years back. Coming to the Centre was the best thing that happened to us. The citizenship classes, the English classes and the youth group; all helped me to integrate into the wider community. Without your support, we wouldn’t be where we are now.”***

– Sebastian, Settlement Client



## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to facilitate newcomer settlement and integration through holistic services and community engagement, carried out within a gender justice and anti-oppression framework.

## OUR VISION

We envision a society in which all people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds participate fully in all aspects of Canadian life. We have modelled an approach that brings together community engagement and community services, working together with newcomers to reduce insecurity and reach integration, strengthen voices, and increase social equality.

## OUR VALUES

- Respect
- Community building
- Participation and voice
- Equity and integration
- Peace with social justice



## OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



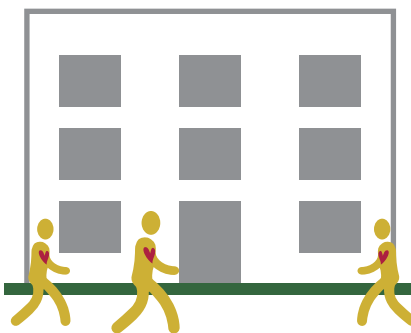
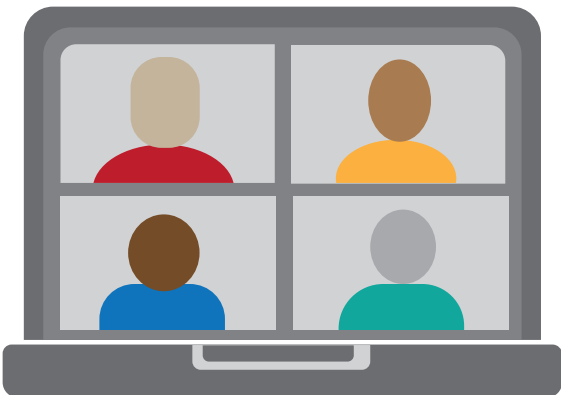
4,057  
clients served  
throughout  
the year



1,394  
MEETINGS CONDUCTED  
ON ZOOM

701

classes workshops,  
and webinars



25,559 visits

by new and existing clients  
(in-person and virtual)

\*one-time and repeat visits calculated

# DELIVERING SAFE, RESPONSIVE SERVICES AMIDST A PANDEMIC

There is no question of the detrimental impact COVID-19 has had on the world, and the pressure it has put on our families, friends, and neighbourhoods. As we saw the increasing need from our communities for support, we endeavored to be there for them in their new reality – to be a calm and steady voice in the face of chaos.

## Compassionate Leadership

One of the Centre's first responses to the pandemic was the formation of an in-house **COVID-19 Task Force** that focused on keeping clients and staff as safe as possible. Comprised of members of the Leadership team and the Health & Safety committee, the Task Force was quick to endorse public health guidelines, procure personal protective equipment (PPE), and implement appropriate safety procedures. As the course of the pandemic continued to shift, the Task Force made strategic and operational decisions that prioritized the safety of clients and staff and empowered them to take care of themselves and their loved ones. We adapted our existing infrastructure and created new ways of working in order to reach these goals.

## Leading With Technology

Thanks to the **Centre's tech-forward thinking and robust technological capacity**, we were able to have all 50+ staff members working from home within 48 hours of our decision to close our four physical offices. Our IT team worked tirelessly to assign and deliver computers and to reconfigure our 3CX (VoIP) phone system so we could seamlessly answer calls from our homes as though our clients had called our offices.

We expanded our use of Zoom, a communications tool we had already been using for our bridging programs, and Microsoft Teams to offer classes, webinars, and community meetings so clients could access these services from home. VirtualCare was added to our tech toolkit, allowing us to provide end-to-end, fully encrypted, online mental health counselling to increasing numbers of clients in need of this support.

Suddenly **working from home meant we needed to work differently – together but apart**. The Microsoft SharePoint file management system we began earlier came to fruition in 2020 and allowed us to share documents, access them remotely, and collaborate on them in real time. We used Teams to host Monday morning all-staff meetings to keep everyone up-to-date with changes as they were happening. As staff became more comfortable with the platform, smaller team meetings were scheduled on Teams, and staff used it for quick questions that didn't need a full email or phone call.



Our Mandarin Seniors Group celebrated the holidays together online.

## Agility: An Essential Ingredient

Having a **highly engaged and skilled workforce** allowed us to quickly adapt all of our services to new online delivery formats.

Right from the beginning, clients with existing appointments were served over the phone with no need to reschedule, meaning one less disruption in our clients' lives. The majority of clients sought urgently needed information about housing, employment and financial stability, and health measures, and our team provided the caring and professional support they needed. Later, we transitioned our citizenship classes and other workshops online, and participants were well-engaged thanks in part to training they received through our **new Digital Literacy Project**.

With services and resources at the Centre and around the globe quickly moving online, the Digital Literacy Project was created to ensure no one was left behind. Clients received one-to-one training from the Settlement team



on how to use computers and mobile phones to access resources and connect with their families and friends while isolating during the pandemic. Topics included setting up email accounts; navigating communication platforms such as WhatsApp and Zoom; using Google Translate, Adobe Reader and the Microsoft Office suite; and accessing government websites. **Teaching these digital skills was a practical way to empower newcomers**, including women and seniors, who might not otherwise have been able to get the support they needed to stay safe and healthy. We also saw how learning new skills boosted their confidence and self-esteem.

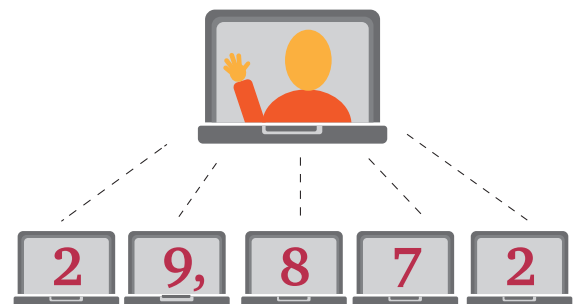
Our Bridging programs – who were already using Zoom – were the first classes to move completely online, followed by our Language Instruction Giving Hope to Trauma Survivors (LIGHTS) and Helping Our Newcomers Prepare for Employment Success (HOPES) groups. Clients received instruction and support via video conferencing tools, and those who experienced mental health challenges exacerbated by the pandemic received online individual counselling from our Community Mental Health team to help manage their symptoms so they could continue learning.

After transitioning classroom-based material to an engaging online format, our modified Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes launched online too, with **staff and students trained to confidently navigate their new classroom settings**. Some former LINC pupils were excited to rejoin our classes after several years away from the program – due to distance or competing priorities – to pursue their learning online under these new circumstances. We were also lucky to have two former LINC students who volunteered daily as classroom assistants to help their peers with the online learning process.

Our Care for Newcomer Children (CNC) program went virtual for the first time, giving parents and their young children a unique opportunity to learn together and to be connected with the Centre. The fun, educational videos created by our childminding staff remain some of the most popular on our YouTube channel!



The children in our CNC program are so engaged with the lessons!



**participants connected with us on Zoom**



## Communication is Crucial

The COVID-19 Task Force sought to provide staff with up-to-date, trustworthy COVID-19 information in order to help them make informed decisions and to help their clients do the same. Information was shared via email and on Teams so it could be read and used as a resource. **The Task Force invited Toronto Public Health (TPH) to speak (virtually) with staff about COVID-19 vaccinations**, and afterward staff reported feeling more confident in discussing the topic.

In a time of rapid change, it was also important to communicate these changes – from COVID-19 safety procedures to new HR policies – to staff in a timely, effective manner so we could continue to be agile. For example, prior to staff returning to modified in-person service delivery in August 2020, the Human Resources and Communications teams collaborated to produce a short video for each of our four physical offices to demonstrate how to safely attend to clients on-site. The videos, featuring colleagues from each of the offices, were well-received and sparked conversations that better prepared staff for re-entry into the office environment.

With clients no longer visiting our offices each day, external communication also required a new approach. **An increased social media presence and more targeted email campaigns to clients and community partners helped us reach clients in their homes**, and word of mouth continued to be strong within our communities.

# RESPONSIVE INITIATIVES



## #AskMNLCT Webinar

In April, we started our **#AskMNLCT webinar series, a dynamic weekly forum to respond to urgent questions from the community.** We published written information and followed up with live webinar chats in English, Arabic, Mandarin and Spanish. Each episode was themed on topics like conflict resolution, managing financial constraints, and creating stability, and featured panelists from across the Centre.

The series, organized by our innovative Communications team, filled an important gap for clients, enabling them to quickly access credible information and resources to support their socio-economic and mental health and well-being. Pulling upon the subject matter expertise from all teams across the Centre, including Settlement, LINC, Bridging, Counter Human Trafficking, and Mental Health, clients could ask questions in the language they were most comfortable using. Our staff skilfully and smoothly interpreted questions and answers, responding in the original language as well as English to ensure all participants could benefit from the information. We also had participants who preferred to use the opportunity to practice their English communication skills, and it was wonderful to know that they felt safe and confident enough to do so.

The initiative also provided a platform for other organizations to connect with our program staff, who could share their expertise and support their peers in getting the information they needed for their clients. What started as a pilot project to communicate about COVID-19 subsequently **morphed into a popular monthly series that focused on wider aspects of settlement and integration.**

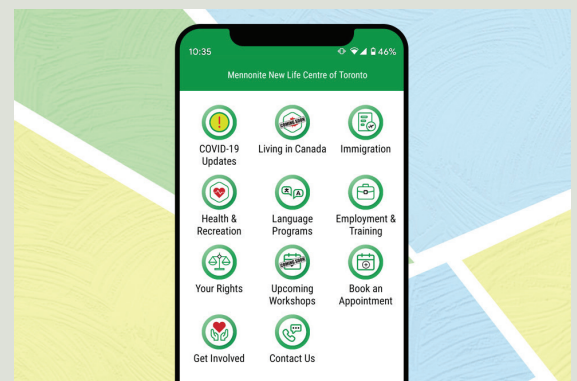
#AskMNLCT's popularity led to a spin-off series called **MNLCT Invites**, which saw community partner organizations instead of MNLCT staff as the subject matter experts. This allowed us to share the expertise of trusted organizations with our newcomer communities so they could get support beyond our areas of practice. These sessions also supported the ability of other organizations to reach and interact with newcomer communities and better understand their service needs. Our first

guest was Toronto Public Health, who shared multilingual information on how participants could keep themselves, their families, and our communities safe from COVID-19.

## MNLCT iCent Newcomer Support Mobile Application

Developed in partnership with iCent, an information delivery and communication tool for international students, our app was **designed to put credible multilingual information, tools, and support into the hands of newcomers who were settled or settling in Ontario.** We were in the early stages of development when the pandemic hit, so we decided to fast-track a “first draft” of the app in order to get COVID-19-related information out to clients as quickly as possible.

In May 2020, we released the beta version, which contained advice on how to deal with the physical, mental, emotional, and financial impact of the pandemic, and push notifications allowed us to share new resources as they emerged. Throughout the remainder of 2020, we added more sections on issues like settlement, immigration, legal rights, employment, health, recreation, and the latest issues affecting our communities. Immigrants and refugees can now **easily access useful, trustworthy information in English, Arabic, Mandarin, and Spanish.** Added functionality, such as online appointment booking and in-app chat, is planned.





# OUR PROGRAMS

MNLCT provides effective, tailor-made programs and services that empower individuals, families, and communities to pursue their dreams for a better life in Canada.

## SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

One-on-one counselling and group workshops to assess and support newcomers' immediate needs and future goals.

## COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

Counselling and group programs that reinforce resilience, strength, and well-being for individuals, couples, and families.

## Language Instruction Giving Hope to Trauma Survivors (LIGHTS)

Alternative English-language training paired with mental health supports for vulnerable newcomers who have trouble learning in traditional classroom settings.

## Helping Our Newcomers Prepare for Employment Success (HOPES)

Essential programming to help job seekers, aspiring entrepreneurs, and those needing to enhance their career skills, via coaching support and mental health counselling in the context of resettlement stress.

## LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA (LINC)

English-language training for adult learners from literacy to intermediate level. The corresponding **Care for Newcomer Children (CNC)** service provides fun and educational activities for infant, toddler or pre-school age children so parents can focus on their studies.

## BRIDGING PROGRAMS

Training and support for internationally trained professionals to help bridge their career experiences to the Canadian labour market.

## Bridge to Employment in Media and Communications (BEMC)

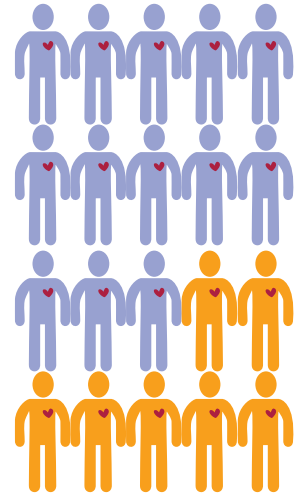
Offering internationally trained media, marketing, and communications professionals multiple pathways to employment or entrepreneurship in the fields of journalism, marketing, public relations, broadcast media, videography, web and graphic design, and photojournalism.

## Bridge to Registration and Employment in Mental Health (BREM)

Offering internationally trained mental health professionals pathways to meaningful employment, with the option of pursuing registration with the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario.

## COUNTER HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Counselling and essential support services for people who have experienced labour trafficking, forced marriage, and sexual or other exploitation in Canada.

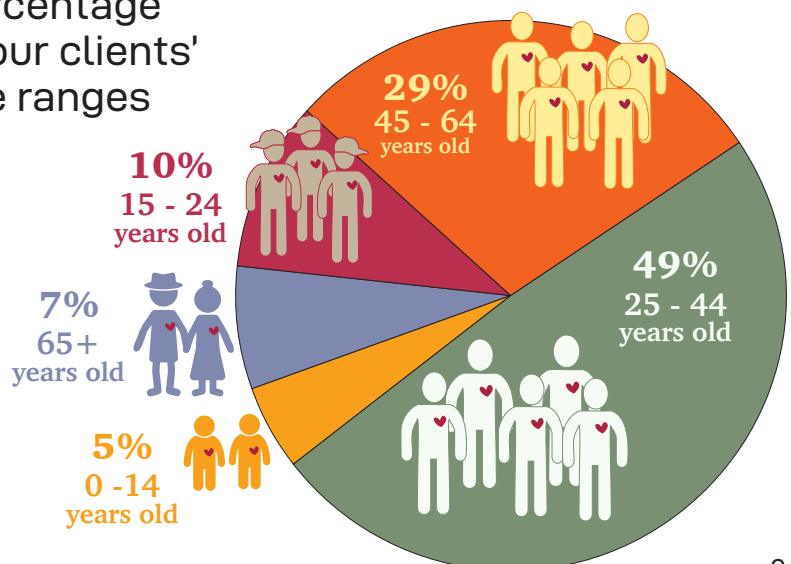


Out of our  
**4,057**  
clients

**64%**  
identify  
as female

**36%**  
identify  
as male

## Percentage of our clients' age ranges







## NEW WAYS OF MEASURING IMPACT

In 2020 we began to collect data for several more strategic performance indicators in the Performance Measurement Framework we launched in 2019; throughout this report you will read some highlights of these performance outcomes which illustrate the impact the Centre, its staff, and its programs and services are having in the communities we serve.

We also wrapped up our 3-year engagement with LIFT Philanthropy Partners, the Canadian organization dedicated to using venture philanthropy to improve the effectiveness of not-for-profit organizations, with training on Communicating Your Impact to help us more clearly articulate who we are and what we do. LIFT was instrumental, through their guidance and consultation, in helping us develop a framework by which we could demonstrate and communicate our community impact through both quantitative and qualitative data.



Measuring program outcomes for clients is only one perspective. We know our programs support our clients, but how do they support our communities? Social Return on Investment (SROI) is a way of measuring that: for every dollar invested in a program, we can estimate how much it returns in socio-economic value such as employment, housing, community networks, health and well-being, and more. For our bridging programs, the first of our programs to be evaluated in this way, we know that for every \$1 of program funding we can expect to see \$7 worth of socio-economic value for our communities. Not only do we use our funding wisely, we also extend its value to others!



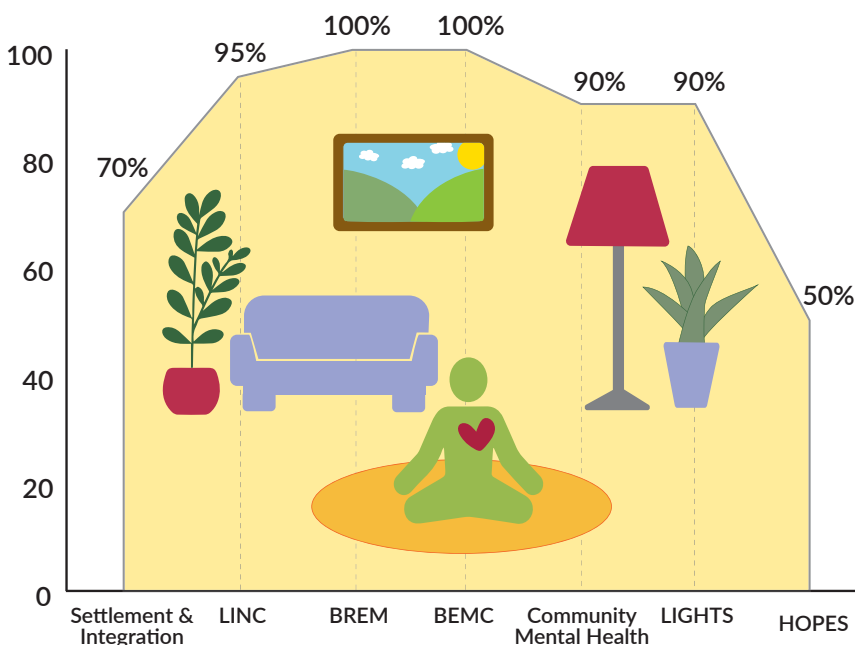
# OUR IMPACT

## Accessing Holistic Support

Clients will often reach out for help with something specific, like filling out government forms or managing family conflict, and once they meet with our friendly, caring staff they share other issues they are struggling with. We offer all clients the opportunity to develop a personalized settlement plan – which maps out their goals for their new life in Canada and creates an action plan on how to achieve them – and to receive our support and encouragement along the way. Every client is offered the opportunity to create a settlement plan - a life and career plan that maps out their integration journey into easy, manageable, achievable steps. Of the clients we served in 2020, about 40% chose to create a settlement plan. As a result of those who invested in the development of their settlement plan, 70% were motivated to identify and overcome their unique barriers by achieving one or more goals in their plan. This includes milestones such as improving their English, enrolling in programs to upgrade their international skills and experience, and finding a meaningful job or an affordable place to live.

For many of our clients, the journey of making Canada home involves many steps. Yes, these can be documented in a settlement plan, but it

**Newcomers are aware of the benefits of holistic settlement services, and access them**



% of clients who received at least two different services and/or referrals that met their various needs

is also evident in the varied services accessed throughout the process of integration. In 2020, 85% of our clients received at least two different MNLCT services and/or referrals. This speaks to the fact that newcomers are aware of the benefits of holistic services and choose to access them. We recorded over 25,000 client visits in this past year demonstrating that integration happens in many small and meaningful steps.

Through our partnership with Aurora House, a transitional house in Toronto that provides shelter and wrap-around services to people who have experienced human trafficking, we provided mental health counselling and support to individuals who have been trafficked or exploited in Canada. Residents experienced significant progress in their lives as they moved on from the shelter to find permanent housing and meaningful employment.

## Acquiring Language And Communications Skills

Being able to effectively communicate remains the number one barrier to integration for newcomers. MNLCT has an over 25-year history of offering language acquisition classes that has resulted in clients gaining the language skills they need to access services and obtain employment. Therefore, acquiring sufficient English communication skills is a critical part of a newcomer's settlement and integration process. Ordinary tasks, from going grocery shopping and securing housing, to finding and succeeding at a job, all require a level of fluency and confidence. Through our Bridging, LIGHTS, and LINC programs, MNLCT offers multiple pathways for newcomers to gain the language skills they need in order to navigate the places where they live, work, learn, and play.

Language skills can be measured in levels called CLB – Canadian Language

Benchmarks – which range from 1 (Basic) to 12 (Advanced). CLB 4 is the level of an advanced beginner and the minimum required to apply for Canadian citizenship. In 2020, half of the participants in our language-related programs achieved a CLB 4 or higher.

Progress in English language acquisition can be measured by a participant's movement from one CLB level to the next as their confidence is built and sustained. We saw favourable results from our LINC, LIGHTS and Bridging Programs where 70% of those enrolled in language acquisition programs moved up one or more CLB levels. This was achieved despite the switch from in-person, on-site learning to virtual learning environments. In addition, learning English requires the right environment for success. Take for example the Language Instruction Giving Hope to Trauma Survivors (LIGHTS) program, which was designed specifically to provide alternative English language training with elements of mental health support for vulnerable newcomers who have trouble learning in traditional classroom settings. It is important to note that LIGHTS participants are just starting to learn English when they first join the program – and are facing learning challenges due to the effects of trauma – so advancing from one level to the next takes a greater time investment. As they progress, the time between levels decreases and their learning is accelerated. By addressing their trauma, developing strategies to support their learning, and improving their confidence in using English, participants significantly improve their everyday communication skills and are prepared to transition to LINC or other language classes to further advance their goals.

Where participants of LIGHTS and the Bridging programs sit at opposite ends of the language spectrum, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) fills in the middle by offering **comprehensive language training for adult learners from literacy to intermediate level (CLB 6)**. In 2020, there was an average of 20% more participants than in 2019 in all our language classes, which may

*“The journey takes time and sacrifice; but anything is possible. The challenges I faced helped me start a new life in a wonderful country, and launch an exciting career which brought my family closer together. It redefined me as a Mexican and gave me a purpose in life.”*

– Erika, chef from Mexico



of clients progress through CLB levels on an annual basis

be attributed to a combination of increased availability of participants during the pandemic and increased flexibility offered by the online format of the classes.

## Participating in the Labour Market

At MNLCT, we encourage clients to dream about their future in Canada and we support them in making plans and taking action to achieve their life and career goals. All programs at the Centre – from Settlement and Language Instruction, to Bridging and Community Mental Health – offer individualized labour market integration services, such as career exploration activities to help clients understand their own knowledge, skills, and abilities within the context of the local labour market; career planning and goal setting workshops; counselling to reduce stressors and learn coping strategies; and ongoing career coaching.

One of the most pressing issues for immigrants is finding a job with a sustainable income. Bridging and HOPES, our employment-specific programs, provided valuable pre-employment preparation for newcomers. Participants received orientation to the local labour market, got help with resume and interview preparation, and grew their professional networks. After completing these programs at MNLCT, participants



expressed a significant boost in their confidence to apply the skills they had acquired to seek employment. Through our extensive network, we also connected clients to educational and training institutions, government and social services, and other resources to help them reach their employment or entrepreneurship goals.

Because of their participation in an employment-related program at MNLCT, nearly three-quarters of our clients confirmed they were employed and potentially seeking a promotion and/or a better job.

Ultimately, though, it is not only newcomers who must prepare to participate effectively in the labour market; employers have a role to play in ensuring they understand international experience and credentials in order to benefit from a diverse talent pool. In 2020, MNLCT fostered newcomer-employer relations for over 150 employers through our employment-specific programming.

In the autumn of 2020, we organized two virtual career fairs called **Job Connect Café**, exposing employers to newcomer talent and vice versa. This exciting online forum brought together job seekers, employers, and experts from the human resources sector to discuss career opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 200 participants attended and eagerly engaged with employers and career specialists. Aside from discovering job opportunities and companies who were hiring, the attendees learned about community resources and strategies for navigating the job market.

Gaining Meaningful Employment

While getting a job – any job – may be an early goal for many newcomers, it is also important to consider the significance of the job beyond its basic financial contributions. Does it pay enough to sustain them and their families? Is it up to the level of their skills and experience? Do they need to upskill or reskill or seek a promotion to find something more meaningful?

In 2020, the impact of COVID-19 on Canada’s labour market was sharp and swift as workers faced layoffs, furlough or termination in precarious jobs across Canada. Our employment-related programs had to adapt quickly to ensure that clients in precarious positions



were exposed to the talent pool of MNLCT clients

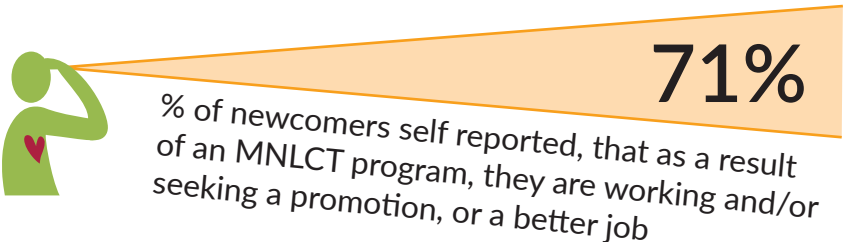


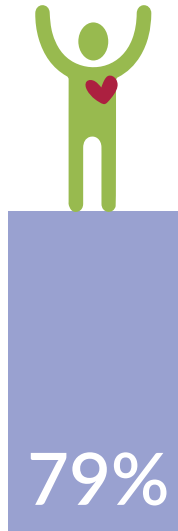
could receive the support they needed quickly. Clients received support from our counsellors to access government support and benefit programs and likewise, we connected clients to programs that would assist them in training, up- or re-skilling.

As a direct result of these services, 79% of clients enroled in a program such as Bridging or HOPES gained employment and/or a meaningful career upon completion of their program.

For example, in our Bridging Programs, clients reported that they were presently employed in the fields they wanted to work in such as mental health and psychotherapy, or media and communications. What is more is that 76% of these participants were able to obtain employment that sustained their financial needs 1-year post-program.

Around 70% of participants who completed the BREM program confirmed that they were employed in meaningful positions that paid a living wage or higher; and that they landed meaningful positions in their desired career fields. The scenario was different in our BEMC and HOPES programs where about a third of graduates indicated the same. This is unsurprising in a pandemic that saw lockdowns preventing people from networking in person, and cutbacks in staff and resources across almost all major industries. The need for more mental health practitioners in Ontario worked in favour of our BREM students.



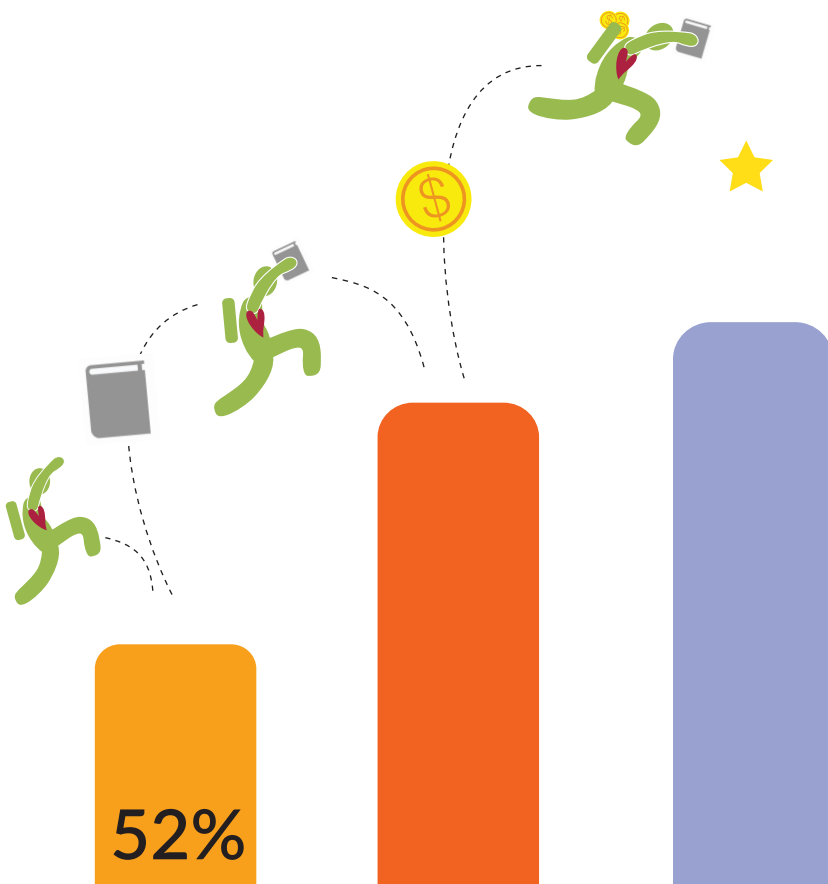


% of program participants who gained employment or obtained a meaningful career upon completion of the program



*“I love the BEMC program and I am meeting wonderful people. The instructors made me comfortable, and opened my eyes to a Canada I haven’t yet seen.”*

– Akinmade, from Nigeria



of newcomers were employed in meaningful positions that pay a living wage or higher



% of newcomers employed in meaningful positions in the field they wanted to work in

Our clients have diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, and bring a wide range of education, skills and talents to Canada. In 2020, we served more than 4,000 people from almost 100 countries around the world.





# OUR PEOPLE

**Our staff are truly the heart of MNLCT.** When we shut down our physical offices and began working from home, teams quickly adapted to the new norm. Within days, we were exploring solutions to how to continue to support clients while maintaining social distancing.

While we had the technological tools and software to continue our work without interruption, we knew it was important to keep the health and safety of our employees top of mind. The COVID-19 Task Force kept staff updated on COVID-19 safety protocols – in and out of the workplace – and promoted a healthy work environment by developing compassionate policies and communicating realistic performance expectations. We were mindful of how colleagues were coping during the lockdown, and staff were made aware that their team leaders were trained to support them with internal and external resources in case they needed any advice or assistance. Team leaders also worked with staff to address job challenges, family issues, and, of course mental and emotional stress as needed. To further encourage a healthy work-life balance during the initial months of working from home, the Task Force introduced Wellness Days that allowed staff to enjoy days off – paid – to take care of pending chores and urgent family matters. These proved to be a popular and welcome benefit.

One thing we missed about not being in the office was the social interactions with our colleagues. So, it was no surprise when what started as a weekly all-staff Teams meeting evolved into a regular check-in, with everyone taking the time to pop in to say hello. From motivational messages to work-related discussions, we got to know and learn from one another while feeling a renewed sense of togetherness.

## Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors ensures the proper and good governance of the Centre while providing the guidance and support needed by our Leadership team to carry out the Centre's Mission and Vision. More so than ever in the past, the Board guided our program adaptations as we responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. They provided a clear and strategic direction for the Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto that has allowed us to remain an agile and responsive organization, while monitoring progress in achieving key goals and priorities.

As volunteers, Board Members offer external expertise and oversight to ensure compliance with legal requirements, as well as effective and responsible use of resources.

MNLCT thanks its Board Members for their contributions to creating a place of welcome where all program recipients receive the services and care they need to make Canada home.

**Board Chair**  
Miriam Reesor

**Vice Chair**  
Edgardo Romero

**Treasurer**  
Sam Sivarajan

**Secretary**  
Miriam Wiebe

**Board Members**  
Leanne Buck  
Rochelle Fine  
Julia He  
Evan Heise  
Kathy Luan  
Jennifer Rajesakar



## SUMMARY OF AUDITED FINANCIALS

REVENUE	2019	2020	2021 (estimated)
Government	3,316,148	3,050,327	3,265,840
Foundations + Other	100,645	103,686	307,472
Donations (Individuals + Churches)	37,036	39,938	49,166
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,453,829</b>	<b>3,193,951</b>	<b>3,622,478</b>

EXPENSES	2019	2020	2021 (estimated)
Staff	2,368,644	2,273,719	2,613,270
Building	538,242	504,779	441,027
Program	398,386	270,405	393,562
Office + Other	145,504	141,208	174,513
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,450,776</b>	<b>3,190,111</b>	<b>3,622,372</b>
<b>Excess of revenues over expenses</b>	<b><u>\$3,053</u></b>	<b><u>\$3,840</u></b>	<b><u>\$106</u></b>

# APPRECIATION TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS AND DONORS

The ability of the Centre to provide modified services right from the very beginning of the pandemic, and to respond as quickly with virtual program delivery as we did, is a testament to the trust and unwavering support of our funders and donors. We are honoured to have received financial contributions from so many caring and dedicated private and public entities, including governmental organizations (federal, provincial, and municipal), foundations, and private institutions. The funding provided by these organizations meant that we could keep our “virtual” doors open while following the direction of local health authorities to ensure the safety of staff and clients. Our ability to be a welcoming and inclusive presence for our community as a whole was grounded in these contributions.

Equally important, we are ever so grateful for our donors and volunteers for their thoughtful contributions and actions, and thankful for our monthly and annual donors for their ongoing commitment to MNLCT’s Mission and Vision. It is because of these supports that we could test out new ideas and approaches to service delivery.

Partnering with organizations from across the province and industry sectors has expanded our influence and impact, giving newcomers in smaller communities the ability to access specialized services not available locally and allowing them to continue to live and work in their community of choice. We were also able to provide broader, richer services to our existing clients by collaborating with like-minded organizations that shared our values and holistic approach.

On behalf of our clients and communities, we thank all those who contributed in their own way to helping newcomers make Canada home.



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada







Mennonite  
**new life**  
centre

   [mnlct](#)  [officialmnlct](#) | [www.mnlct.org](http://www.mnlct.org)